

Police Pressroom, Home

Newsman's Phones Reported Tapped

By Charles A. Krause
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The Baltimore Sunday Sun reported yesterday that two apparent wiretaps were discovered Saturday on telephones used regularly by the Morning Sun's police reporter, Roger Twigg.

Twigg said he has angered Baltimore city police officials over the past year because of several stories he has written joint federal and local investigation of police corruption.

Twigg told a reporter yesterday that he believed the apparent taps, including an apparent tap on his home telephone, were placed on the telephone lines as part of a city police department effort to uncover his sources within the department.

Dennis S. Hill, director of public information for the police department, flatly denied that the Baltimore police department has ever tapped any of the Sun's phones or Twigg's home telephone line.

"We're talking about a serious proposition. The Constitution has something to say about that," Hill said. "We're just not tapping their telephones."

Hill said that the police de-

partment and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. conducted a thorough search of the telephone lines in question late Saturday night and found no evidence of wiretaps.

A telephone company spokesman, Peter B. White, said that "very extensive checks" of the telephone lines revealed "no evidence" of taps, although White did say that the electric voltage in Twigg's home phone was "low," which would be one sign of a wiretap.

Paul Banker, manager editor of the Morning Sun, said through a spokesman that neither he nor the paper would have any further comment on the alleged wiretaps.

Hal Piper, assistant managing editor of the paper, said he could not say what action the paper might take about the apparent wiretaps nor could he say whether the newspaper was satisfied with the phone company's findings that no taps exist.

Police spokesman Hill said that the Baltimore city police department had requested FBI assistance last year in aiding

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Baltimore Newsman Says Phones Tapped

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the probe of city police corruption. The investigation has already resulted in the arrests of eight present and former detectives on charges of accepting payoffs to protect three large-scale gambling operations.

Hill said one of the reasons for asking for FBI assistance was the bureau's expertise in electronic surveillance. Hill specifically said that while he was certain that city police were not tapping the two telephone lines, he could not speak "for any other government agency."

Thomas Farrow, special agent in charge of the FBI's Baltimore office, said, "We are not tapping the Sun's phones." He added, however, "We wouldn't say if we were—if we were."

The Sunday Sun reported that one of the apparent taps was discovered on an internal telephone line linking the Sun's newsroom with the paper's telephone in the police press room in the old city police headquarters building. The other apparent tap was discovered by Twigg on his home telephone line, the paper said.

The apparent tap on the Sun's internal line was found when another Sun reporter in the police press room said he overheard a tape of a conversation he had had minutes before with another reporter in the Sun's newsroom.

The reporter, Robert P.

Wade, said he picked up the phone shortly after completing his previous call and — while waiting to be connected with another party — overheard a part of his previous conversation, leading him to think that his line was tapped.

Twigg, who has been one of the Morning Sun's police reporters for four years, regularly uses the phone which the Sunday Sun said was apparently tapped after Wade overheard a part of his own conversation.

Twigg said he discovered the alleged tap on his home phone after being apprised of the other apparent tap on the Sun's internal line. Twigg said yesterday he had in his possession at home a "sidewinder," a device used to measure electric voltage on a telephone line.

Twigg said a normal telephone would register 10 to 20 amperes when in use but his phone Saturday measured only four amperes, indicating a possible tap because a tap would reduce the amount of amperes registered.

Despite the phone company's statement that it found no taps after "very extensive checks," Twigg said he had been told "there are a million and one ways someone can tap your lines and it is virtually impossible for the phone company to find" the tap.

White, the phone company spokesman, said the man who checked Twigg's phone Saturday night could not be reached yesterday.